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**THESIS**

**THE FUTURE AND PROSPECT OF  
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST  
ASIAN NATIONS**

by

**Arsenio L. Tecson**

**June 1994**

**Thesis Advisor:  
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by

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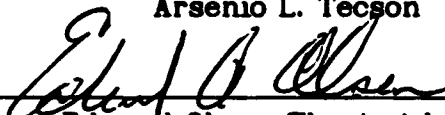
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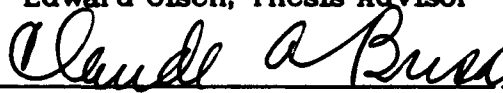
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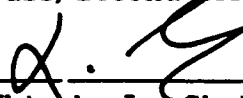
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## ABSTRACT

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been in existence for more than 25 years. Its member nations, (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) have emphasized the role of the association as a neutral organization based on co-operation among members in the spirit of equality and partnership that would bring mutual benefits and stimulate solidarity which can contribute to building the foundation of peace, stability, and prosperity in the ASEAN region in particular and the world in general.

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, this thesis will try to examine the relevance of the ASEAN's original intention in the formation of the organization. With the uncertainty of the US military presence in the region, Japan's growing military capabilities, China's continuous military modernization, and other developments in the region, is it necessary for the ASEAN to be transformed into a defense and security alliance? Is the ASEAN capable of forming a military defense pact? Finally, this thesis will examine the future and prospect of the ASEAN as a regional organization.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Cold War created various bipolar security structures. Many of the nations of the world were divided between the rival camps and identified themselves with either of the two opposing ideologies, communism in the east and capitalism in the west. These arrangements created a military balance of power, and deterrence between the east and the west, which prevented the eruption of a war between the superpowers. The absence of a hegemonic war led to a degree of de facto order in the Cold War international system. This did very little, however, to prevent serious regional conflict from erupting outside Europe and North America. The United States, the former Soviet Union, and China, the so-called Great Powers, have projected their rivalries to the Third World by supporting local conflicts. Superpower tensions fueled and exacerbated these conflicts. The dangers of superpower confrontation were diverted to isolated Third World countries, transforming them into battle fields; this safeguarded the home territories of the superpowers. This is evident in that all the major conflicts after World War II have occurred in Third World countries.

The superpowers transformed local and regional problems into international incidents, thereby making the actors in the

local conflicts dependent upon the Great Powers. Settlement of these regional and local conflicts has depended on the consent of these powers. The security and stability of the Third World nations and their respective regions rely heavily on the support of these powerful states.

With the end of the Cold War and the cessation of the Sino-Soviet-American contention, the concern of some smaller states about the domination of their foreign and defense policies by their benefactors has somewhat diminished. They no longer need to shelter under the wings of the great states as the price of alliance. However, on the negative side, the end of the Cold War also has ended superpower over the use of modern armaments by Third World countries. During the Cold War the Great powers transferred large quantities of modern armaments to sustain their allies. This caused regional arms races which continued after the Cold War, fostering instability in various regions. With the diminishment of superpower influence, regional states must now confront domestic conflicts on their own and either defer, resolve, or possibly go to war over these conflicts.

The United Nations Organization (UN), to some extent, helped in the settlement of these local conflicts. However, the UN could not have been successful without the approval of the Security Council, where all the superpowers are permanent members with veto powers. The participation of the United Nations in the Korean War and the Gulf War of 1991 would not

have succeeded without the full support of the United States and the non-interference of the former Soviet Union. At times the views of the great powers in the United Nations were not consistent with the culture and interests of the conflicting Third World parties. This frequently exacerbates the situation, as shown in Somalia, Rwanda and other conflicts in developing countries.

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was optimism that the incidence of local conflicts would greatly decrease. This proved to be unwarranted. The events in Europe, such as Bosnia, Moldova, and Ossetia; the problems with the former Soviet Union's republics; Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Western Sahara in Africa; Cambodia and the Korean Peninsula in Eastern Asia, cumulatively demonstrated that military conflict and its consequences appear just as endemic today as they were during the Cold War. This may prevail for the foreseeable future.

This also is evident by the rapid increase in the frequency and type of peace-keeping operations that the United Nations has undertaken. " Since its (UN) intense mediation of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the end of the Iran-Iraq War, the United Nations has mounted thirteen new operations, the same number as in the previous forty years. In the first few months of 1992 alone, some 30,000 soldiers have

been added to the UN payroll with the massive new undertaking in Yugoslavia and Cambodia."<sup>1</sup>

Against the background of the uncertainty of the United Nations success in settling international conflicts, the elimination of the Soviet power, and apprehension about the future of the continued presence of US forward forces, a major question now arises as to the need for a regional organization to settle disputes that are regional in scope. UN observers have argued that the United Nations has overstretched its capacity to handle certain crises and that the financial burden of getting involved in all conflicts is too great for the United Nations. For these reasons, this author believes that a regional organization such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is better equipped to handle the dynamics of regional conflict resolution.

The end of the Cold War removed the integrating external factors and increased the discontinuity between the global system and regional subsystems. With internal economic problems and increasing resource constraints, the major powers may no longer have the capacity or the interest to get involved in regional conflicts as they did in the past.

Getting regional organizations involved in conflict resolution will also ease the overloaded burden

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<sup>1</sup>. MacFarlane, Neil and Weiss, T. G., "Regional Organizations and Regional Security", Regional Security, Edited by John Arquilla, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 1994

responsibilities borne by the cash-strapped UN. As stated by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali:

In this new era of opportunity, regional arrangements or agencies can render great service... the Security Council has and will continue to have the primary responsibility of maintaining peace and security, but regional action as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with the United Nations could not only lighten the burden of the Council, but also contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in the international affairs.<sup>2</sup>

If regional organizations address the regional problems of the Third World states, it will give them the opportunity to have greater control over their environment. As Richard Taylor observed, it also will give them "a chance to develop their growing political maturity and economy. An opportunity to mitigate their disadvantaged position in the international system."<sup>3</sup>

This does not mean, however, that regional organizations should be formed throughout the globe and try to settle all international crises. This thesis limits its consideration of the applicability and effectiveness of regional organizations in the region of Southeast Asia through the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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<sup>2</sup>. Boutros-Ghali, Boutros, UN Secretary-General, An Agenda for Peace and Peace-Keeping, United Nations, New York, 1992, pp. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup>. Taylor, R., Regionalism: The Thoughts and the Deeds, The Framework for International Relations, St Martin Press, New York, 1990, p. 164.

## II. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### A. DEFINITION

There are no absolute or naturally determined regions. Relevant geographical boundaries vary with different purpose; for example, a relevant region for security may not be one for economic integration.<sup>4</sup>

The Cold War and its bipolar arrangements demonstrated that regionalism can be based on many factors aside from geographic proximity. Functions and purpose are the key factors in the formation of regional organizations. The Organizations of Islamic Countries (OIC) was organized due to the commonality of religion, the European Economic Council (EEC) and North America Free Trade Association (NAFTA) were formed for the trade and economic considerations of neighboring states, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established to maintain security and defense. Even within the realm of defense, organizations differ in their perceptions of the ways defense arrangements may be implemented. They include: collective security, collective self-defense, security regimes, and a security community.

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<sup>4</sup>. Nye, Joseph, S., International Regionalism, Little Brown and Company, Boston, Mass., 1968, p.76.

*Collective Security* was the term given to the system for the maintenance of international peace that was supposed to replace the balance of power system after the Second World War. The United Nations system for maintaining international peace and security is a clear example of a collective security structure. Collective self-defense refers to military alliances as provided for in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This is aimed at the containment of global or systemic-level security threats, such as international communism or capitalism. These regional organizations are often dominated by global powers, like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, both of which were controlled by superpowers. A Security community refers to a group of states that has become militarily and otherwise integrated. Usually, there is real assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically but will settle their disputes in some other way. This type of system is solely controlled by its member-states. Good examples are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). At the end of the Cold War, these organizations are considered examples of indigenous security regionalism, and they appear to be gaining prominence. A Security regime refers to the principles, rules

and norms that permit nations to be restrained in their behavior in the belief that others will reciprocate.<sup>5</sup>

The types of conflicts existing within a given region generally determine the role and the effectiveness of a regional organization. Conflicts may be classified into four types. There are intrastate conflicts, which refers to disputes within a single state; and intramural conflicts which involve conflicts among member states. There also are external conflicts which involve regional states that are not members of the regional organization, while extra-regional conflicts involve actors that are external to the region.

#### **B. ROLES AND STRATEGIES**

Regional security organizations have three basic roles: conflict prevention, conflict containment and conflict termination. It is the function of the organization to influence the interests and capabilities of the member states. The ability of the organization to carry out these functions will determine its effectiveness and limitations.

In the *conflict prevention* mode, the role of the regional organization is to foresee conflict and to prevent outbreaks of hostilities or any form of disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior may mean the overt use of force and other forceful

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<sup>5</sup>. Alagappa, Muthiah, "Regionalism and the Quest for Security: ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict", Journal of International Affairs, Columbia University, New York, 1993, pp. 442-443.

actions for the purpose of compelling a state to alter or abandon its position through the use of coercive political, diplomatic and economic measures. The preventive role requires redefinition of the interests and capabilities of the concerned states which may be achieved through assigning property rights, providing information, altering the patterns of transaction costs, as well as altering the underlying power capabilities of states through collective action.<sup>6</sup>

Strategies of socialization, integration, reassurance and deterrence are relevant to the conflict prevention role. Socialization can contribute to the construction of security regimes, while integration can foster the development of a security community and minimize or eliminate security problems created when little is known of the security capabilities and preparedness of neighboring parties. Reassurance and deterrence strategies are critical in preventing the outbreak of war, both intended and unintended.

In its role in *conflict containment*, the task of a regional security organization is to deny victory to the aggressor and to prevent the spread of conflict. Denial of victory includes stopping the aggressor short of attaining his full goal. It may also include reversing past gains. Preventing the spread of conflict includes stopping horizontal escalation in which other countries and other issue areas

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<sup>6</sup>. Mitchel, C. R., The Structures of International Conflicts, St Martin Press, New York, 1981, p. 171.

become involved. Prevention may also be directed toward halting the vertical escalation of conflict up the ladder of violence, possibly including the use of weapons of mass destruction.

In the containment of conflict mode, a regional organization may use either *isolation* or *intervention* in the crisis. Isolation means providing a *cordon sanitaire* to prevent vertical and horizontal escalation of the conflict, allowing time and opportunity for the competing actors to resolve the conflict bilaterally. Isolation is a passive form of involvement, avoiding a partisan role.

In intervention, direct and active involvement through the coercive application of collective political, economic, and military resources are utilized by the organization to terminate the conflict. There are four types of intervention: collective security, collective self-defense, coercive diplomacy, and peacekeeping. In collective security, intervention is undertaken to enforce the security system of the regional organization in a conflict among member-states, and sometimes in intrastate conflicts. This type of intervention is normally conducted by the UN and only with the concurrence of the Security Council. In collective self-defense, the regional organization confronts an aggressor on the battlefield. A security alliance among the member-states is necessary for this kind of intervention. Coercive diplomacy is used to affect the aggressor's will rather than his

capability. Political, economic and military pressure is applied to wear down the adversary, forcing him to alter his intentions and agree to a mutually acceptable resolution of the conflict. Peacekeeping, on the other hand, is used to facilitate mediation efforts by interposing neutral forces between opposing forces thus preventing further fighting.

In the *conflict termination* mode, the task of a regional security organization is to halt and bring hostilities to a satisfactory conclusion through a resolution or settlement. A satisfactory conclusion from the perspective of the regional organization may include defeating the aggressor and reestablishing the status quo, achieving a compromise, or removing the source of conflict. Conflict settlement focuses on achieving an agreement to end the use of violence and resolve the more immediate and overt dimension of the conflict. Conflict resolution seeks to remove the source of conflict, which requires changes in the goals, attitudes and perceptions of the conflicting parties.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. FORMER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

#### **1. SEATO**

The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was based on the Manila Pact, a Southeast Asian collective

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<sup>7</sup>. Ned Lebow, Richard and Stein, Janice., "Beyond Deterrence" Journal of Social Justice, Issue 43, No. 4, 1987, pp. 65-71.

security treaty, created by the United States in 1954 in response to the growing concern over the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia. It was patterned after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was created in 1954 as a defense alliance. The difference between the two organizations, however, was that NATO had a standing force while SEATO had only a military planning office. In SEATO, only two member states were from southeast Asia, Thailand and the Philippines. The rest were mostly major powers, including the United States, Great Britain, and France. Pakistan was also a member because of East Pakistan. When Bangladesh attained her independence in 1971, Pakistan withdrew from the organization.

SEATO failed primarily because there was too great a diversity of interests among the western states and even between the Asian nations. The two nations from Southeast Asia (the Philippines and Thailand) joined the organization because of their bilateral defense treaties with the United States. Other nations in the region viewed the creation of the organization as a imperialist venture that was designed to control the region. This was particularly true of Indonesia, which believed that the region should be free from the influence of great powers. The United Kingdom lost its concern with the organization after the independence of Malaysia and Singapore. The British then revived the Five Power Defense Agreement (FPDA) with Australia and New Zealand in 1966.

France withdrew its financial support for SEATO after its failure in Indochina in the mid fifties. This left the United States as SEATO's sole supporter.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. MAPHILINDO

The MAPHILINDO was the acronym given to the three Malay states that attempted to form a "Greater Malay Confederation" in the early 60s. Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia formed the confederation to address territorial disputes derived from their colonial legacies. Malaysia and the Philippines struggled over the state of Sabah, while Indonesia and Malaysia experienced tensions over Sarawak. The confederation was short lived because the parties could not agree on the objectives of the organization and were confrontational on the territorial issues. The region was on the verge of war. A third party, or an extra-regional actor with no interest on the conflicts was necessary to mediate the disputes. No major power would intervene because it was very unlikely that the United States and Great Britain would want to jeopardize their relationships in the region over Third World territorial disputes. With the vigorous mediation of Thailand and an effort to have a single organization in Southeast Asia, MAPHILINDO was later integrated to the inactive Association of Southeast Asia (ASA).

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<sup>8</sup>. Hearing, Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate Ninety-Third Congress S. Res. 174, US Commitment to SEATO, March 6, 1974.

### **3. ASPAC**

The Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) was composed of Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and South Vietnam. It was created in June of 1966 in Seoul, South Korea, primarily to check the escalating war in Vietnam. One of its main objectives was to safeguard their national independence and integrity against any Communist aggression. It also served as a consultative association to foster political, economic, cultural, and social cooperation. It aimed at assisting the mutual development of its members' national economies. The organization did not last long because many leaders believed that China should have been included instead of Taiwan, a view which antagonized many Asian nations. ASPAC was never formally terminated, but has ceased to meet since the fall of South Vietnam.

### **4. ASA**

The Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) was organized in Bangkok, Thailand in July of 1961 by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. It was the first regional co-operative effort of nations in Southeast Asia to be organized without the participation of any major powers. It was, however, handicapped by its limited membership and by accusations that it was a pro-Western, anti-communist group whose motive was to promote the interests of the United

States. The Association's activities were disrupted because of the deterioration of relations between Kuala Lumpur and Manila over the latter's claim over North Borneo (Sabah), which later became part of the Malaysian federation in 1963. ASA was later revived when, Thailand, after so many attempts, succeeded in hosting a conference in Bangkok in 1966, that was attended by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. With the attendance of the disputing parties (Malaysia and the Philippines over Sabah, and Indonesia and Malaysia over Sarawak), the meeting sealed the approval of reconciliation and the idea for the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was formally presented. The first major step in the regionalization of Southeast Asia was finally created. ASA was later joined by Singapore and her inclusion terminated the association and gave birth to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in August of 1967.

### **III. ASEAN**

#### **A. HISTORY**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional organization formed by the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand through the ASEAN Declaration or the "Bangkok Declaration" on August 8, 1967, in Bangkok, Thailand (Enclosure A. Map of Southeast Asia). In 1984, Brunei joined the regional association. The formation of the ASEAN was based on " the premise that co-operation among nations in the spirit of equality and partnership would bring mutual benefits and stimulate solidarity which can contribute to building the foundations of peace, stability, and prosperity in the world community at large and in the ASEAN region in particular."<sup>9</sup>

From the outset, the ASEAN was conceived as a regional organization for economic, social and cultural co-operation only. Its objective was to institutionalize cooperation in all fields, except in the military arena. The founding fathers of the organization, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, viewed the ASEAN as a neutral grouping and not as a US-sponsored security alliance patterned after the unsuccessful South-East

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<sup>9</sup>. 10 YEARS ASEAN, Secretariat, ASEAN, Sagittarius, Press, Jakarta, Indonesia, p. 9.

Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). "Fear from being engulfed by the great power rivalry and the uncertain credibility of great power security guarantees in the late 1960s contributed to the birth of an indigenous notion of regional order, best reflected in the ASEAN's 1971 proposal for ZOPFAN."<sup>10</sup> The Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) constituted a commitment from the member states to abstain from policies that would require external intervention in the region, most especially from the superpowers.

With the end of the Vietnam War, and the US implementation of the "Nixon Doctrine" urging its regional allies to assume greater self-reliance in defense, the dream of the Association for peace through neutrality was gradually being attained. With the increased tensions of the Sino-Soviet rivalry, however, and with the invasion and occupation of Cambodia by Vietnam in 1978, the hope of the ASEAN countries to be free of great-power rivalry in the southeast Asian region diminished. The ASEAN had to accept the United States' and China's support against perceived Soviet-backed Vietnamese expansionism.

Because of the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, the old rivalry between East and West became a tri-polar conflict in the form of an East-East-West entanglement in the region (China-USSR-US). Later, due to US-Soviet detente and Sino-US

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<sup>10</sup>. Acharya, Amitav, A New Regional Order in South-East Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era, ADELPHI Paper 279, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1993, p. 8.

rapprochement in the 1980s, the Southeast Asian region, particularly the Indochina subregion, became more of a Sino-Soviet or an East-East rivalry.

Despite the presence of competing superpowers and the crisis of Cambodia in the region, many political analysts viewed the ASEAN as one of the most successful regional organizations. As Frank Ching noted in 1993, "Now, 26 years later, ASEAN is one of the most successful regional organizations in the world."<sup>11</sup>

The creation of the ASEAN marked the consummation of the armed conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia and signalled its founding members' intention to reduce the scope of further inter-state warfare. Although intramural conflicts between Malaysia and the Philippines over the Sabah issue and between Singapore and its Malay neighbors (Indonesia and Malaysia) threatened the existence of the ASEAN in the 1960s, the regional group was able to survive, thanks to a sense of common vulnerability in the face of the threat of externally backed communist insurgencies. By the time the United States withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the ASEAN had succeeded in diffusing intramural conflicts and was gradually developing into a limited "security community, in the sense that no member would seriously consider the use of force against

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<sup>11</sup>. Ching, Frank, "Eye on Asia", Far Eastern Economic Review, August 12, 1993, p. 27.

another to settle disputes".<sup>12</sup> It was not, however, a defense community, because there was no common threat and there were divergences in cultural, ideological and historical experiences. Consequently, the Association has had no common defense or military alliance. Because of the impact of the Indochinese conflict, however, a common threat was perceived and the continuous cooperation developed through regular political, diplomatic, cultural and military exchanges. This development has caused greater cohesion among the ASEAN states as the Singapore Foreign Minister claimed in 1982, "the ASEAN nations had come to a point where intra-ASEAN conflict had either become irrelevant or been muted considerably."<sup>13</sup>

The Cold War regional order in Southeast Asia, however, was in constant conflict with the ASEAN's desire for regional autonomy and with the reality that the influence and involvement of the great-powers in the region will always be present.

#### **B. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

The ASEAN organization formally states that cooperation shall take into account the following objectives and principles in the pursuit of political stability:

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<sup>12</sup>. Simon, Sheldon, Regional Security Structures in Asia: The Question of Relevance, Paper prepared for the US War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, February 12, 1992, pp. 20-22.

<sup>13</sup>. "A Call for Unity", Asiaweek, October 22, 1982.

The stability of each member state and of the ASEAN region is an essential contribution to international peace and security. Each member state resolves to eliminate threats posed by subversion to its stability, thus strengthening national and ASEAN resilience.

Member states, individually and collectively, shall take active steps for the early establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

The elimination of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy is a primary concern of member states. They shall therefore intensify cooperation in economic and social development, with particular emphasis on the promotion of social justice and on the improvement of the living standard of their peoples.

Natural disasters and other major calamities can retard the pace of development of member states. They shall extend, within their capabilities, assistance for relief of member states in distress. Member states shall take cooperative action in their national and regional programs, utilizing as far as possible the resources available in the ASEAN region to broaden the complementarity of their respective economies. Member states, in the spirit of solidarity, shall rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences.

Member states shall strive, individually and collectively, to create conditions conducive to the promotion of peaceful

cooperation among the nations of Southeast Asia on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit.

Member states shall vigorously develop an awareness of regional identity and exert efforts to create a strong ASEAN community. This shall be respected by all and respecting all actions on the basis of mutually advantageous relationships in accordance with the principles of self-determination, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of nations.<sup>14</sup>

### C. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the Bangkok Declaration and the formation the Association in August of 1967, no armed conflict has ever erupted between the member nations of the ASEAN. This is probably the single most important achievement of the organization. Several intra-regional confrontations among member states have occurred, involving border issues, immigration, fishing rights, and problems of piracy. But because of the cooperation and close mediation of the ASEAN members, such conflicts have been resolved or discussed diplomatically and peacefully at the negotiation table.

The regional stability created by the ASEAN in Southeast Asia has greatly contributed to international peace and

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<sup>14</sup>. Declaration of ASEAN Accord, signed by all Head of States of the Five Original Members of the ASEAN in Bali, Indonesia, February 24, 1967.

security. The continuous dialogue and exchange of information among ASEAN members has created a strong solidarity and built an image of confidence not only within Southeast Asia, but from a global perspective. Individually, the voices of the ASEAN nations cannot be heard in international fora. But as an organization, with members speaking as one, it is a major concern to powerful nations and organizations.

This was demonstrated by the ASEAN in the Cambodian conflict when the United Nations was forced to act and compelled Vietnam to withdraw its forces in Cambodia. This was done through the concerted actions of the ASEAN membership which saw the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia as a threat. The UN supervised election in Cambodia in 1993 culminated the ASEAN goal of self-determination for the nations of the region.

The removal of the American bases in the Philippines was also a step in the realization of the Association's objective for the establishment of a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in the region. Though this move by the Philippines was viewed by some ASEAN leaders as untimely, particularly in Singapore, it was welcomed by Indonesia and Malaysia.

The importance of the ASEAN was also recognized by the international community when the rich nations and organizations like the United States, Japan, South Korea, and other nations, as well as the European Community (EC), agreed

to become dialogue partners in the annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (ASEAN-PMC) held after every ASEAN Ministerial conference. This shows that the ASEAN consensus is of great importance to these powerful dialogue partners. The ASEAN-PMC was later joined by China, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations as observers.

#### IV. ASEAN STATES' NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ASEAN

##### A. BRUNEI

The inclusion of Brunei in the ASEAN became the corner stone of its external legitimacy in 1984. The absolute monarch of Brunei or the Malay Muslim Monarch (Melayu Islam Bereja, MIB), had been challenged by some of its neighbors. Since its independence in 1984, Brunei's constitution has characterized Negara Brunei Darussalam as the Beraja Islam Melayu (Monarchical Islamic Malay) state. The legitimacy of the rule of the Sultan which bases its governance on the dictates of Islam has been questioned due to the absence of any popular participation by the people in the political process. Thus, the profile of Brunei in international politics has been low. After joining the ASEAN, however, Brunei's recognition as part of the international system has been firmly established.

Today, Brunei is, in many ways, a modern welfare state. The government, though relatively new, has provided basically more than the basic needs of its people. Compared to other developed nations, it has high levels- of education, health standard and longevity. However, in spite of its enormous wealth, its extreme dependence on the oil industry has caused a one-sided economic structure which has created complex internal problems for the country. As a consequence of the

booming oil industry, all other sectors of the nation's economy have been hampered. Rubber, which was once a major crop of the country, was phased out by 1980. Farming has become part time and agriculture has virtually disappeared. It now contributes less than 1 per cent of the total GNP. This made the country dependent of imports on all food and construction materials.

The country's economy is mainly engaged in the high income oil and construction industries. Construction, after oil, is its second main commerce because of the government's high investment in infrastructure. However, due to the high living standard which resulted from the expanding oil and construction business, wages have increased so much that there is a large influx of immigrant workers to fill the big demand for manual labor. This has changed the attitude of the country's privileged Malay population into a desire to work for the government, and to leave the private sector and manual labor to the immigrants. About half of the working population of Brunei is found in the public sector.<sup>15</sup>

The importance, therefore, of Brunei's membership in the ASEAN is paramount because of its dependence on exports. Other ASEAN states provide Brunei food and help run the nation's economy by supplying immigrant manual laborers. The small nation of about 250,000 with a small armed force also needs

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<sup>15</sup>. Blomqvist, Hans, C., "Brunei's Strategic Dilemmas", Pacific Review, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 172-173.

the ASEAN to help guarantee its land and sea borders. Despite Brunei's lack of military capabilities, the ASEAN's solidarity guarantees that the country's oil wealth will be preserved and that no ambitious nation will dare interfere in the domestic affairs of the country for fear of ASEAN pressure.

## **B. INDONESIA**

"Ketahanan Nasional" or National Resilience has been the foundation of the Indonesian doctrine and national strategy.

National resilience is a dynamic condition of will power, determination and firmness with the ability to develop national strength to face and overcome all manners of threats internal and external, direct or indirect, that may endanger the Indonesian national identity and the total way of life of the nation and its people, and to achieve the objectives of the national struggle .... National resilience is an organizational and management concept for peace, prosperity and order in the life of the Indonesian nation based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.<sup>16</sup>

National resilience was initially conceived from the country's experience in the Indonesian struggle for independence against the Dutch. Despite the superiority of the Dutch in terms of organization, resources and international support, the Indonesians succeeded in their war for independence through positive mental attitudes (never losing hope), the mobilization of all resources (men, women and children), and the employment of strategies that harnessed

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<sup>16</sup>. Explanatory Note to the Republic of Indonesia Law, No. 20, paragraph 5, 1982.

indigenous strengths and exploited the weakness of the enemy.<sup>17</sup>

For the Indonesians, it is vital for the nation to be resilient and self-reliant. It means that a country should never depend on an external force to defend its sovereignty. The fall of South Vietnam and non-communist Cambodia and Laos were viewed by the Indonesian military as a result of their excessive reliance on external support. It is for these reasons that Indonesia was a zealous opponent of the SEATO and a proponent among the ASEAN states of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), and the nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region. The ultimate purpose of the ZOPFAN, for Indonesia, was to deny opportunities for intervention by extraregional powers and to regulate the presence and activities of external powers in the region.

In line with Indonesia's policy of self-reliance, it, more than any other nation of the ASEAN, is committed to patrolling and controlling its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). These are one of the busiest commercial routes in the world connecting the Gulf through the Indian Ocean to Northeast Asia.

The current plan of Indonesia to modernize its defense force calls for the procurement of 30 maritime patrol aircraft

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<sup>17</sup>. Suwondo, Purdo, S., "Some Notes on the History of Nation-Building and Insurgencies in Indonesia: An Indonesian View", Asiaweek, September 20, 1983, pp. 42-43.

equipped with Harpoon anti-ship missiles. In addition to the budgeted 30 domestically built corvettes and 23 missile frigates, Jakarta is negotiating with China and Germany for more acquisitions. Indonesia's aging A-4E/h Skyhawks are scheduled to be replaced by mid-decade with British Hawk 200 fighter-bombers and enough F-16s to reach a full compliment of 60.<sup>18</sup> When all these systems are commissioned, Indonesia will have considerably enhanced its ability not only to defend its sea space against piracy, smuggling, and other unwanted activity but to defend a large part of the ASEAN region.

Among the member states of the ASEAN, Indonesia is the only country that has the potential for development as a major military power in the region. It has the population and the potential wealth based on its oil deposits. Its strategic location at the middle of the critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) in Southeast Asia, linking the Indian Ocean and the Andaman Sea to the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea, gives it a good reason to strengthen its navy. With the diminishing US presence in the region, a strong Indonesia would give the ASEAN a sense of security from any ambitious intentions of either China or India.

If the ASEAN states will set aside rivalries and suspicions among themselves, support Indonesia in its military modernization and assist in safeguarding the SLOCs in the

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<sup>18</sup>. Asian Defense Journal, March 1992, p. 15.

region, this will greatly enhance the security and stability of Southeast Asia and strengthen the Association.

### C. MALAYSIA

Security is not just a matter of military capabilities. National security is inseparable from political stability, economic success through international trade and harmonious diplomatic relations. Without these, all the guns in the world cannot prevent a country from being overcome by its enemies, whose ambition can be fulfilled sometimes without firing a single shot. All they need to do is to subvert the people and set up a puppet regime.<sup>19</sup>

This statement of Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dato Mahathir, in 1986, emphasized the country's trust in diplomacy and dependence on international trade. It was a time when the economy of the country was prospering and emerging into one of the so-called Asian Dragons. To maintain the thrust of the nation's progress in economic development, Malaysia should improve its relationship with its neighboring countries, particularly in trade and set aside old border and territorial disputes.

Until the mid-1970s, Malaysia was faced with numerous threats to its national security. Internally, the two major security concerns have been the threat of communist insurgency and the threat of racial and religious extremism. For the past four decades, the banned Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM) and

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<sup>19</sup>. Dato Seri Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Speech before the First ISIS National Conference on National Security, at ISIS, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 15, 1986.

its factions have been waging an unsuccessful guerrilla war to overthrow the legally constituted government. The emergency measures adopted in the 1948-60 period reduced the threat to a relatively minor one. Although there was a resurgence of the threat in the early 1970s, it is now under control. Compounded by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the developments in Eastern Europe and improved relations with China, the appeal of communism, particularly to relatively affluent Malaysians, has diminished. The CPM may, however, attempt to advance its cause by exploiting domestic (racial and religious) strife.

The delicate racial and religious composition of Malaysia's population of 14 million (Malay-48.2%, Chinese-32.1%, Indian-8.5%, Other indigenous-11.1%),<sup>20</sup> has also made the development of domestic political consensus a formidable task. Several race riots between the majority Malay and the Chinese minority occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With the joint efforts of the government and the civilian sectors, especially after the formation of Singapore in 1965, racial discrimination has been minimized.

Among the ASEAN states, Malaysia could be considered as one of the more progressive nations and is approaching Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) status. However, due to the increasing wealth of the average Malaysian, like Brunei, the

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<sup>20</sup>. Source: General Report of the Population Census: Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 1985 (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 1987).

country now depends on inexpensive immigrant workers from its Asian neighbors for its manual labor, as in Brunei. This has generated an influx of illegal migrants workers from other countries, particularly the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. To prevent this and to arrest this illegal immigrants, the government adopted strict measures which were considered violations of human rights by other countries. These included making arrests after religious services in Catholic churches and mosques. This policy has caused considerable resentment among some members of the ASEAN.

The border issues, in which Malaysia has disputes with all the ASEAN states, and the migration problem, are present concerns which the Association could help settle. In fact, the territorial dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah, and the problem over the Sarawak with Indonesia in the 1960s would have erupted into an armed confrontation without the intervention of the ASEAN.

In its economic, Malaysia in 1990 , through its Prime Minister Dato Mahathir, wanted the ASEAN and other East Asian states to form an independent economic block, the East Asia Economic Group (now Caucus - EAEC), without the United States. This was, however, rejected by Japan. Malaysia's economic intentions were also viewed by the ASEAN states as unacceptable since only 15% of ASEAN exports in 1988 were traded within Southeast Asia; almost 80% were with the United

States.<sup>21</sup> Malaysia's design for a greater ASEAN economic grouping is not feasible at this time since most of the ASEAN countries' economies depend on the United States.

External threat perceptions to the country have been the Peoples Republic of China, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union, in that order.

#### **D. THE PHILIPPINES**

The Philippines is the only ASEAN member state which faces a complex combination of internal and external problems. Internally, the country is confronted by communist insurgents, Muslim secessionists, military rightist rebels, and uncontrolled criminality, compounded by double digit inflation and a declining economy. Intramural conflict involves the lingering dispute with Malaysia over Sabah and the contested claims in the South China Sea over the Spratly Islands.

In the 1950s, the country was a model among the Third World nations in the region as far as containing communist subversives and developing its economy. The Philippines was way ahead of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and other East Asian nations in its economic and political development in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, because of the country's desire and American influence to pursue an open and free economy with democratic ways, patterned after the developed

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<sup>21</sup>. Gibney, Frank, B., "Creating a Pacific Community" Foreign Affairs, November/December 1992, p.21.

Western countries, (which the Filipinos were not ready to accept), the country plunged into an economic and political tail spin. For almost twenty years, former president Ferdinand Marcos maintained martial law and, under his authoritarian rule, made the nation into one of the poorest states in the region burdened with graft and corruption, political cronyism, and governmental mismanagement.

Marcos was ousted in 1986, by a popular "Peoples Revolution" which installed a new president, Corazon Aquino, the widow of a slain popular political leader. Aquino brought back the democratic system of government, but because she was inexperienced and displayed poor leadership, the Philippines turned from bad to worse.

In 1992, a new president was elected, Fidel V. Ramos, from whom much was expected. A graduate of the US Military Academy (West Point), Ramos promised to make the nation be at par with its ASEAN neighbors by the end of his term in 1998. The country is making progress, but at a very slow rate. The present administration has to solve the numerous internal problems it faces. The rightist military rebels have been neutralized, and the government claims that the communist insurgency has been minimized, but the Muslim secessionist campaign and the lack of local peace and order are still major threats to the country's national security.

The military and the local police which are the primary agencies tasked in maintaining peace and order are in a very

sad state. Because of the pull-out of the US bases in the Philippines, upon which these agencies relied heavily for modern equipment and training, the country will have difficulty in attaining its goal in joining the NICs ( Newly Industrialized Countries) in the region.

The ASEAN solidarity has helped the Philippines, when all the ASEAN Head of States agreed to meet in Manila for the ASEAN Summit Meeting in 1987, in spite of the worsening peace and order situation prevailing in the country. The Philippines needed an opportunity to show the international community that the country was safe for foreign investments. The presence of all the ASEAN Heads of State showed that the Philippines was not as dangerous as pictured in the press. It also helped bolster the declining image of the house wife turned president, Corazon Aquino.

Economically, the Philippines was able to use the ASEAN to raise the price of coconut oil and sugar in the international market. The sugar quota of the Philippines to the United States was greatly reduced in the early 1980s. This reduction has immensely damaged the economy of the country, together with the decrease of the price of coconut oil. The ASEAN, as a group, could put pressure in the international market for the stabilization of the prices of these commodities to include rubber, tin and other products produced by different ASEAN states.

Until the Philippines has solved its internal problems, it cannot do much to meet its international obligations and cooperate actively in collective regional security matters.

#### **E. SINGAPORE**

Singapore is an island city-state with an area of about 240 square miles. The strategic vulnerabilities of the country - its size, location, very short history as a nation and state, demography, and total dependence on the international market economy - have a decisive influence on its foreign policy, national interests and the development of its defense doctrine. The country's security is best described by the statement of Goh Chok Tong:

The (Singapore Armed Forces) alone cannot guarantee the safety of your home and family.... modern wars involve not only the armed forces but also everyone in the community. Long before the first shot is fired, would-be aggressors will try to create political instability and divide the people. Witness Iran and Cambodia. A united community that feels and thinks as one has no crack for others to exploit.<sup>22</sup>

The problem of the small size of the country is compounded by its geostrategic location. It has two relatively giant neighbors, Malaysia in the north and Indonesia to the west and south. This prevents Singapore from creating strategic depth at sea and in the air which is vital to the country's national

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<sup>22</sup>. Goh Chok Tong, Former First Prime Minister Singapore, "Working with One Accord Towards Total Defense", Singapore Armed Forces Newsletter, February 1984, p. 5.

defense. The political and economic conditions of these neighbors greatly affect the nation's general position.

The demographic profile of the country's population also adds to its security concerns. There is little or no common bond uniting the different ethnic groups that make up Singapore's 2.7 million population (Chinese 76.6 percent, Malays 14.7 percent, Indians 6.4 percent, and others 2.4 percent). As in Malaysia, this racial and religious mix has the potential for domestic strife which is compounded by the racial and religious conditions of its two neighbors, especially Malaysia. There is a possibility of racial and religious conflict in Malaysia spilling over into Singapore or internal conflict within the country providing the opportunity for intervention by neighboring countries. Singapore's predominantly Chinese population sets Singapore apart from its Malay-Muslim neighbors.

Among the ASEAN countries, only Singapore has attained the status of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC). For the country to maintain its economic advantage, it must rely heavily on the security and stability of the region. This is the reason why Singapore readily offered to host United States military facilities when the US bases in the Philippines were pulled out. Singapore policy planners believe that the presence of the United States is still vital for the region's security in spite the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the partial settlement of the Cambodian conflict. Some critics

denounced Singapore because of this initiative. They said it was a breach of ASEAN solidarity for making such a unilateral decision which will clearly affect all the member countries of ASEAN. The presence of US forces in the country was also seen as a violation of the ASEAN policy of ZOPFAN and the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

Malaysia was the most vocal critic of the offer by Singapore, and said that the presence of the United States in Singapore was designed to enhance Singapore's military status, to alter the regional balance of power, and to make the country a "superpower base." Malaysia's Information Minister and UMNO Secretary-General Datuk Mohamed Rahman said Singapore's action was aggressively directed at Malaysia:

You are telling us: What you see is this sea of hostile Malays surrounding you and you are saying: 'Hey, don't meddle with us, we have the Americans behind us.'<sup>23</sup>

Malaysia firmly believes that it has consultative rights over Singapore's foreign policy which derive from history and proximity. By contrast, Thailand's reaction to Singapore's offer was positive. Bangkok says that the United States continuous presence would promote regional security and substantially reduce the ASEAN defense expenditures. For Indonesia, President Soeharto presented no objection as long as the facilities will be confined to maintenance functions only,

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<sup>23</sup>. "Singapore Urged to Think Again on Bases Offer to US", Straits Times (Singapore), Weekly Overseas Edition, September 9, 1989, p. 2.

"if it goes beyond maintenance, this will be dangerous as it will attract outside powers to the region."<sup>24</sup>

Other major vulnerabilities of Singapore are its total dependence on the international economy and a heavy reliance on imported labor. The country's impressive economic growth has been a function of its ability to trade with, and service, international clients. Sharp downturns in the international economy would have negative consequences, not only for Singapore's national economy but also for the political stability and security of the island republic. The negative growth rate registered in 1985 demonstrated the country's economic vulnerability.

Regarding the manpower requirements of the country, 150,000 immigrant workers make-up about one-quarter of the nation's manufacturing sector work-force.<sup>25</sup> Though foreign workers have contributed greatly to economic progress of Singapore, like Malaysia, the influx of migrant workers into the country has caused a lot of concern to the government. To remedy the situation, in 1988, a S\$60 million incentive package was introduced to the employers to automate production and mandated a policy of lowering the maximum dependency ratio on foreign workers from 50 to 40 percent. In 1989, legislation

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<sup>24</sup>. As quoted in "Jakarta Won't Object if Offer is Restricted to Maintenance Only", Straits Times (Singapore) Weekly Overseas Edition, October 7, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>. "High Price of Foreign Labor", Singapore Bulletin, Editorial, December 1988, p. 2.

was passed amending the Immigration Act of Singapore that a mandatory three months' imprisonment and three strokes of rattan (caning) was to apply to any foreigner entering the country illegally or overstaying in excess of 90 days. This was condemned by other ASEAN countries, particularly Thailand, which has the largest number of illegal migrants. The concern of the Thais caused Singapore to offer amnesty to these illegal workers and they were repatriated to their own countries.

Singapore does not depend much on its ASEAN neighbors for trade, but relies the United States and Europe for investments and exports. These constitute more than 45% of the total (US-30.95; EEC-15%). Only Malaysia within the ASEAN has substantial imports from Singapore (8.4%), while Japan has 9.4%.<sup>26</sup>

Singapore as a small island state, to avoid being overshadowed by bigger nations and to successfully maintain its lead economically in the international setting, must invest heavily in international and regional organizations.

#### **F. THAILAND**

With the partial settlement of the Cambodian problem, Thailand has turned its attention from Indochina as a

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<sup>26</sup>. Beng, Cheah, H., "Towards A Sustained Recovery in the Singapore Economy and the New Capitalism", Southeast Asian Affair 1990, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990, p. 331.

battlefield to Indochina as a market place. Thailand, like Malaysia, is developing into a NIC.

With the assumption of Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan in 1988, Thailand's first elected Prime Minister since the short-lived and violence-plagued government of Kukrit and Seni Pramoj, (March 1975 to October 1976) and the conservative administration of General Prem Tinsulanonda, the country has progressed considerably. The stewardship of Chatichai, a former Army Major-General and head of the Chart Thai (Thai Nation) Party, was initially viewed with uncertainty and was not expected to last long. The unstable Chart Thai-led coalition of six parties only survived the four year constitutional term, but strengthened its democratic process.

The success of the government is partly based on Chatichai's own widespread popularity. A long-time veteran of Thai political battles, beginning as a young officer at the time of his father Lieutenant-General Phin Choonhavan's 1947 coup, Chatichai came to the Prime Minister's Office with the reputation of being a good-time-loving playboy. In office, however, the 69-year-old Chatichai, worked 12-14 hour days, and has demonstrated deft political skills and a public style that has appealed to the people. As a populist politician, Prime Minister Chatichai has shown a seldom-erring ability to keep his finger on the public pulse. He has rewarded his business supporters, kept the bureaucrats off-balance, and forged an independent foreign policy course that rhetorically

infuses Thai nationalism with new vitality as Thailand acts to turn the battlefields of Indochina into a market-place.<sup>27</sup>

Thailand's major shift in its foreign policy was in 1989, when Chatichai gave Hun Sen of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) a warm reception in Bangkok. This move was inconsistent with the other ASEAN states' stand, which insisted that to talk with the Phnom Penh regime was to confer legitimate status on the Vietnamese backed government of Cambodia. However, this action of Thailand though initially unpopular, proved to be a wise strategic move which paved the way for the eventual settlement of the Cambodian crisis. The Hun Sen visit made the three Khmer Resistance factions recognize the reality of the PRK government. Prince Sihanouk dropped his initial demand for a complete dismantling of the Hun Sen government prior to negotiations and a UN-supervised general election.

Thai diplomacy may have been limited in the settlement of the Cambodian crisis due to the interest and active participation of the great powers in the Paris Conference, but Thailand's move toward friendly relations with Phnom Penh and its cordial affiliation with Vietnam, has assured Bangkok of great participation in transforming Indochina from a War Zone to Trade Zone.

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<sup>27</sup>. Weatherbee, Donald, E., "Thailand in 1989", Southeast Asian Affairs 1990, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990, pp. 335-337.

As far as regional organizations are concerned, the Chatichai government has downgraded its ASEAN participation. With its impending NIC status, the country seems to view the ASEAN nations as competitors rather than partners in building a regional economy. Bangkok shares the view of Australia and Japan that any economic grouping in East Asia should include the United States and wider participation of other NICs.

## V. INTERESTS OF THE GREAT POWERS

### A. UNITED STATES

During the Cold War, the United States' primary goal in Asia was " to create a series of primarily bilateral security agreements that would serve as a cordon sanitaire around the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China as well as their allies in North Korea and Indochina."<sup>23</sup> Containment, the purpose of which was to establish allies in all regions of the world to stop the spread of communism, NATO in Europe, SEATO in Southeast Asia, South Korea and Japan in Northeast Asia are but a few of the bilateral and multilateral alliances of the United States in the containment of communism. The US military presence in Japan, Korea and the Philippines was forward-deployed forces in the Pacific designed to serve as quick response forces for any crisis. It was deterrence against the expansionist ambitions of communist countries. US commitments to the different bilateral defense treaties with other Asian nations were part of that deterrence. It was there to protect the sea lanes of South China Sea, the Western Pacific to the Andaman Sea, and the Indian Ocean. (Enclosure B)

The United States interests in the region have been varied and based mostly on a bilateral relations. The United States'

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<sup>23</sup>. Simon, S. Op. Cit. p. 1.

treaties and alliances with individual states differ depending on the threats facing the country and on the interests of the United States. From World War II until the Nixon administration and the so-called "Nixon Doctrine", American involvement in the Southeast Asian region was demonstrated by a commitment of US troops to contain the spread of communism and by aid for economic recovery. After the collapse of South Vietnam, and during the Nixon administration, because of the anti-war sentiments in the United States, US troop involvement was gradually withdrawn. However, military and economic aid continued to assist the countries of the region in their internal communist insurgency problems and for their continued economic recovery.

During the latter part of the Reagan period, when the economies of the ASEAN countries were developing and evolving into trade competitors and there was a manifestation of ASEAN solidarity and strength, US attention gradually shifted from individual states to the regional organization and from the viewpoint of security to US economic perspectives. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the diminishing threat of communism, the emergence of the "Economic Dragons", the withdrawal of US bases from the Philippines, and the domestic demand for cuts in US defense spending, all sizeable US forces in the ASEAN region have been withdrawn. The Clinton administration is now focusing its attention heavily on

economic relations. However, even with the end of the Cold War the United States' security interests in Asia remain:<sup>29</sup>

1. protecting the United States and its allies from attack
2. maintaining regional peace and stability
3. preserving US political and economic access
4. contributing to nuclear deterrence
5. fostering the growth of democracy and human rights
6. stopping proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and ballistic missile system
7. ensuring freedom of navigation
8. reducing illicit drug trafficking

Also, the "Six Principle of US Security Policy in Asia" are:<sup>30</sup>

1. Assurance of American engagement in Asia and the Pacific.
2. A strong system of bilateral security arrangements.
3. Maintenance of modest but capable forward-deployed US forces.
4. Sufficient overseas base structure to support those forces.

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<sup>29</sup>. A Strategic Framework for the Asia-Pacific Rim. Report to US Congress. 1992, Prepared by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region).

<sup>30</sup>. Secretary Richard Cheney, US Secretary of Defense, "Six Basic Principles of US Security in Asia", Speech an the APEC in Tokyo, Japan, November 22, 1991.

5. US Asian allies should assume greater responsibility for their own defense.

6. Complementary defense cooperation.

US interests in the region, are consistent with the views of some ASEAN leaders that the US presence in the Asia-Pacific region is necessary for regional security and that US disengagement in Asia will pose a threat to the stability of ASEAN.<sup>31</sup> This may not be compatible with the ASEAN principle of ZOPFAN, but the United States is the only power with the political, economic and military weight to ensure that the long-term challenges to peace and security within the region, from China and Japan, remain benign and constrained.

The stability of the region is of utmost interest to the United States because this will assure the continuity of the US-East Asia and Pacific two-way trade which has increased steadily since 1967. (Enclosure C). This trade is greater than U.S. its trade with Western Europe and Latin America. The security of the area will also mean stable and increasing trade with the growing economy of China.

The United States' policy with the ASEAN can best be described by the statement of the US Secretary of State James Baker before the ASEAN Post Ministerial conference in July 6, 1989.

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<sup>31</sup>. Kreisberg, Paul, H., Chui, Daniel, Y., and Kahan, Jerome, H., Threat Perceptions in Asia and the Role of Major Powers, A Workshop Report, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1993 pp. 8-10.

Our respect for and collective effort with ASEAN serve as a pillar of U.S. policy in the Pacific..... Together, we must ensure the security and stability of the Pacific. U.S. security commitments in the region have fostered an environment in which the ASEAN economies have flourished. Changing threats and resource constraints notwithstanding, the United States intends to maintain its presence in East Asia.<sup>32</sup>

The continued presence of the U.S. in the region will also discourage any hegemonic ambition of any state for regional power. It serves as a balancing factor to China, Japan and other external actors with a zeal for power in Southeast Asia.

#### **B. PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

Since World War II, from a Western perspective, post-war China has always been viewed as a politically unstable, overpopulated and industrially infant nation. However from the Southeast Asian viewpoint, it is a formidable neighbor. To some the PRC was seen as a guarantor and a source of support against hostile Soviet-Vietnamese alliance. To others, China is a future adversary which is building-up its strength to assert regional hegemony when the time is ripe.

At present, China is preoccupied with internal economic reform efforts, which were hampered by the 1989 Tiananmen incident and compounded by spiralling hyperinflation and growing corruption. The future of its' foreign policies will

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<sup>32</sup>. Secretary Baker, US State Department, Address at the ASEAN-PMC in Brunei, July 6, 1989.

depend generally on the future of China's aging supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping and other octogenarian policy makers.

During the Cold War, China's foreign policy has been largely built on the triangular framework of United States, the Soviet Union and China. With the collapse of the USSR and the developments in Eastern Europe, China has gained a considerable benefit. The normalization of relations with Russia and the removal of the military threat from the former Soviet Union, China has been able to negotiate significant reductions in the forces deployed along the former Sino-Soviet border. This is probably the only time that the country has felt secure in that area.

Traditionally, Communist China has been a supporter of local communist movements in the ASEAN region, from Thailand to Indonesia and the Philippines. This partisan moral and material support to local insurgents has elevated local conflicts to an international level. However, due to aggressive diplomatic efforts, and the eventual normalization of diplomatic relations with China by all the ASEAN states, support for these local insurgents has ceased. By the early 1990s, China and all the ASEAN states have established or resumed diplomatic relations with one another. The Sino-ASEAN relations are now better than before since the local Communists and, to a large extent, the ethnic Chinese have become less of a problem to the ASEAN.

Despite China's internal problems, the country's economy is growing at an astronomical pace with huge increases in defense spending. "China is the fastest growing economy in the world, with what may be the fastest growing military budget."<sup>33</sup> What worries the ASEAN countries most is the military build-up that China has embarked upon. "In 1992, it purchased 26 SU-27 fighter jets from Russia, and it is expected to buy another dozen or more. China has also reportedly bought SA-10s, a missile similar to the American Patriot, but perhaps not as sophisticated, from Moscow. By some accounts it is also negotiating for the purchase of up to 79 MIG-31 fighters, which could be built in China's Guizhou Province in cooperative arrangement with Moscow. China has acquired air fueling technology, apparently from Pakistan and Iran, and it is believed to have converted some bombers into tanker aircraft."<sup>34</sup> Some military analysts believe that the Chinese are contemplating the acquisition of an aircraft carrier.<sup>35</sup>

Another major concern of the ASEAN is China's claims over the Spratly Islands. In early 1992, China decided to legislate sovereignty over the Spratly, Paracel, and Diaoyutai Island

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<sup>33</sup>. Kristof, Nicholas, D., New York Times former Bureau Chief (1988-1993), "The Rise of China", Foreign Affairs, November/December 1993, Vol. 72, No. 5, p. 59

<sup>34</sup>. Kristof, N. D., Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>35</sup>. Kristof, N. D., Ibid., p. 65.

groups. This decision has renewed long-simmering disputes with neighboring countries. Japan and several ASEAN countries, surprised by the new Chinese law, have lodged protests to test Beijing's response. Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnamese officials have made commitments that the Spratly problems will definitely be resolved through peaceful negotiations.

Analysts maintain that China does not have the military muscle to forcibly occupy all the islands it claims and its official statements have called for negotiations. Therefore, the latest law could be a ploy by Peking to draw out the legal and negotiating strategies of other countries before China itself decides on its own course of action.<sup>36</sup>

Also, the ASEAN is concerned with the continuous supply of military equipment to Burma. It has also made an apparent deal with Burma in developing two islands in the Indian Ocean as an observation post- and perhaps eventually as some kind of a naval base.

China's intention at the present may just be to enhance its economic position and to strengthen its defense for external threats. As viewed by other nations, however, particularly the ASEAN nations, the build-up of ones own defense can be interpreted as an aggressive act by another.

Economically, China also represents a source of economic competition for the ASEAN states. It is a direct rival in certain markets, such as Japan, and for certain products,

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<sup>36</sup>. "China, Testing the Waters", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 12, 1992, pp. 8-9.

especially raw materials and agriculture. Equally important for much of Southeast Asia is China's capacity to attract foreign investment, particularly from Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, thereby reducing foreign direct investment in the region.

Another problem in the Sino-ASEAN relations which might be encountered at present is the perennial Taiwan issue. Because of Taiwan's progressive economy, the ASEAN states have to maintain unofficial relations with Taiwan which Beijing has continuously protested. Taiwan has pursued strong relations with the ASEAN and like China, has expressed its desire to be a dialogue partner of ASEAN.

Despite all these apprehensions, the Sino-ASEAN relations have greatly improved. As both sides are expected to enjoy growth, there is an added incentive to further economic cooperation to sustain their growth and combat protectionism in the industrialized world. China has even suggested at the July 1992 ASEAN-PMC Conference in Manila that Beijing and ASEAN should sign an agreement modeled on the treaty between China and the European Community (EC) to further economic and trade cooperation. A market-oriented and prosperous China offers clear economic opportunities to the developing economies of Southeast Asia. The mutual political and economic needs of the PRC and the ASEAN states, especially after the resolution of the Cambodian conflict, will mean a stable and

secure Southeast Asian region. As Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi was quoted in a June 1993 speech,

As a potential economic and political superpower (China) has to be reckoned with. It could be in the interest of the Southeast Asian countries to ensure that China becomes constructively engaged in regional affairs.<sup>37</sup>

### C. JAPAN

As Charles Morrison observed,

For the past quarter of a century, there has been speculation about Japan's future international and regional roles, fueled principally by three phenomena: Japan's rise to economic superpower status, the huge gap between its economic and technological capabilities and its limited political and military strength, and the inability of the Japanese to articulate a clear-cut and convincing statement of their future international interest.<sup>38</sup>

Japan's Southeast Asian policy has undergone transformation since World War II. From the early 1950s to mid-'60s, the relationship was characterized by the pursuit of economic diplomacy through payments of reparation for war damages. It was a period when there were still antagonism and hostile feelings by the Asian countries toward Japan because of its war atrocities. Following the reparation period towards the end of 1960s, Japan's policy shifted to a more active participation in regional economic development-e.g., the

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<sup>37</sup>. Vatikiotis, Michael, "Mixed Motives", Far Eastern Economic Review, 24 June 1993.

<sup>38</sup>. Morrison, Charles, E. Japan's Roles in East Asia, East-West Center Reprints, Economic and Political Series No. 11, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1993, p. 175.

establishment of the Asian Development Bank, the Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia, and the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC). The major involvement of Japan in Southeast Asia, particularly the ASEAN, was a result of the so-called "Fukuda Doctrine". The then Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda declared in August of 1977 Japan's positive politico-economic role in Southeast Asia. The three principles of the Fukuda Doctrine were: Japan rejects a military role; Japan will do its best to consolidate relationships of mutual confidence and trust based on "heart-to-heart" understanding; and Japan will be an equal partner of ASEAN while aiming at fostering mutual understanding with the nations of Indochina.<sup>39</sup> This Doctrine was aimed at giving Japan a greater political role in Southeast Asia by securing a stable coexistence between ASEAN and Indochina.

Japan's relationship with the ASEAN has always been tied to economic assistance. This is to remedy the anti-Japanese sentiment with some ASEAN states due to the great trade imbalance existing between Japan and ASEAN. Japanese protectionism and high tariffs, make it difficult for ASEAN products to enter Japan. This was exacerbated by the Japanese use of synthetic rubber which severely affected Malaysia and other rubber producing nations in the region. Some ASEAN

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<sup>39</sup>. Sudo, Suedo, "JAPAN-ASEAN RELATIONS, New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy", Asian Survey, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5, May 1988, pp. 511-512.

critics claimed that Japan only gives in to economic pressures from the West, mainly the United States.

In spite of the trade friction between them, ASEAN countries have begun to undertake emulation policies, following the success of Japan's economic development. Malaysia has adopted a "Look East" policy, and Singapore a "Learn from Japan Movement."

In regional security issues, the current economic problems of the United States, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, have created a situation wherein the United States has had to change its dominant role in East Asia. Because of the closure of the US bases in the Philippines (Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base), and the US Congress' demand for cuts in defense spending and the Pacific force down-sizing as presented in the 1990 East Asia Strategic Initiative Report (EASI) (Enclosure D), future regional political-military relationships will be determined greatly by an indigenous power like Japan despite its "Fukuda Doctrine" of a small Military role. It is, of course, in the economic dimensions that Japan greatly leads in the world and the Asia-Pacific region in particular. But Japan is moving toward more political involvement in the Southeast Asian region. Although actively engaged in all aspects of economic life in the region, Japan has not, however, assumed the role of regional spokesman or has it sought to establish a clear position of regional economic and political leadership. It is probably

feared that any regional initiatives might be misinterpreted both at home and abroad as an attempt to restore the prewar and wartime notion of a Japanese-led co-prosperity sphere. US leaders, however, expect Japan to assume a greater role in East Asia, particularly in defense of the sea lanes.

Since World War II, Japan has played a passive role in international political affairs. " Under the policy direction established by the former Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida in the 1950's, priority was given to reconstruction and development , and Japan looked to the United States for foreign policy leadership and security."<sup>40</sup> However, Japan has lately shifted its passive international political role towards a more active and aggressive regional role. "Although, Japan's defense spending is about 1 percent of gross national product (GNP), it ranks third largest in the world and in direct budget expenditure, larger than all the rest of East and Southeast Asian states combined."<sup>41</sup> This, however, reflects the far higher wage, procurement, and overhead costs in Japan. Also, Japan's military forces are geared toward defensive missions and have few projection capabilities. It still depends on the United States for its external security. Due to the events in the American environment, the United States has played a major part, either directly and

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<sup>40</sup>. Morrison, C. E., Ibid. p. 175.

<sup>41</sup>. Kreisberg, Paul, H., Chui, Daniel, Y., and Kahan, Jerome, H., Op. Cit. pp. 16.

indirectly, in increasing the pressure on Japan to play a more active diplomatic and military role in the region and in the world in general. The direct pressure from the United States is focus on the increased "burden sharing" that Japan should contribute to maintain the US forces in Japan. In 1991, Japan contributed over \$3.3 billion to support US forces in the Pacific, which was about 50 percent of the cost of maintaining US forces in Japan (less salaries, maintenance for US family housing, and limited construction cost). By 1995 the Japanese are expected to pay about 73 percent of the cost of stationing US forces in Japan. (Enclosure E) Other external pressures came more indirectly in that the Japanese and others in Asia, have felt less able to depend upon the United States to protect their interests in a stable regional order, with the elimination of the Soviet threat and the Chinese emphasis on internal and economic affairs.

Two events have marked Japan's sudden change in its policy of non-involvement in international security and military affair. These important events were:<sup>42</sup>

1. In April 1991, the Japanese government send minesweepers to the Persian Gulf to help clean-up Iraqi mines. This marked the first time since World War II that a Japanese military contingent had been sent overseas. The Japanese, after consulting with the ASEAN countries, were given

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<sup>42</sup>. Kreisberg, P. H., Chui, D. Y., and Kahan, J. H., Ibid. pp. 12-14.

general statements of support. China, however, warned about long-term implications.

2. The Kaifu government reintroduced legislation to permit Self-Defense Forces to participate in U.N. peace-keeping missions. In June 1992, the PKO (Peace-keeping Operations) Cooperation Law was finally passed in a compromise form. Under the new legislation, Japan sent 700 Self-Defense Forces engineering personnel to participate in the U.N. Peace-keeping operation in Cambodia. This action represented a historic departure in that for the first time since World War II, Japanese military personnel were engaged in a foreign operation in Asia. The legislation, however, does not permit these personnel to be engaged in combat operations. It has been reported that this unit had been attacked and was engaged armed conflict.

These moves by the Japanese, though generally agreed to by the ASEAN nations, have been viewed by many observers as the start of a greater Japanese regional security involvement.<sup>43</sup> The acceptance by the ASEAN of the military involvement of Japan in the Cambodian Resolution can be viewed as a sign of acceptance of a Japanese security role beyond self-defense. There are, however, two factors that are formidable obstacles to any Japan-dominated sphere of influence in Asia. China

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<sup>43</sup>. Presented by participants of a 13 Asia-Pacific countries Workshop in August 1992, at the East-West Center, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

presents a major challenge for Japan's dominance due to suspicions and deeply rooted experiences. China believes that a strong Japan is a threat not only to China, but to the region and it will do everything to prevent Japan from attaining such a status. The other factor is Korea. Both North and South Korea are extremely sensitive to signs of militarism in Japan. Koreans on both sides of the DMZ believe that Japan wants the division of the peninsula to remain, because of fear of the power of a united Korea and to better exploit the Koreans.

Economic tensions are another source of friction in Northeast Asia. Taiwan and South Korea regularly protest Japan's huge bilateral trade surpluses with them. In contrast, the ASEAN nations generally display a more positive attitude toward a more comprehensive role by Japan in the Asia-Pacific region. The Malaysian Foreign Minister, Abu Hassan Omar, in May 1989 noted that Japan would be the most single important factor affecting ASEAN's future. However, the most effective means of developing, channeling and containing Japan's Asia-Pacific role is through a strong regional institution. The ASEAN with its solidarity can be a potent organization to harness whatever hegemonic ambition Japan has.

#### **D. RUSSIA/FORMER SOVIET UNION**

Historically, the Soviet Union together with China has been the traditional supporters of the local communist

insurgents in the region, particularly in Southeast Asia. The non-communist countries in the region have always been fearful of the Soviet Union and communist expansionism. With the end of the Cold War and the Soviet threat to Asia no longer existing, Russia as the largest component of the former Soviet Union, continues to play a security role in the region, though on a very reduced basis. Some analysts characterize Russia as a "tired superpower" trying to recuperate, acting as if it was on a "self imposed exile" from the Asian region.<sup>44</sup> A large part of Russia is in Asia, but its internal problems have made it incapable of pursuing any real policy objective in the region. Even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December of 1991, strategic Soviet interests and military power in the Southeast Asian region were diminishing.

The great concern over Russia and the former Soviet republics are the high-technology weapons and know-how of all kinds that may be marketed to other countries in exchange for trade and to secure financial flows to assist their nationally dwindling economy. It is not any threat that the Russians might pose to the region which concerns ASEAN, but what it cannot do to control the former satellites it had developed. North Korea seems determined to develop its nuclear capability due to the inability of Moscow to provide security from potential external threat. Russian withdrawal of support to

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<sup>44</sup>. As characterized by the Vietnamese Representative in Asia-Pacific Workshop. See footnote number 7.

both Vietnam and North Korea has created an atmosphere of insecurity for both of these countries. This poses threats to the region as a whole.

At present, Russia's interest in the region is purely focused on trade and possible markets for its sophisticated weaponry. It will content itself to play a minor role in the security system of the region and center its policy on its relation with the United States.

#### **E. INDIA**

India's ambition to assume the role of a great power has caused concern to Southeast Asian countries. Indian policy makers believe that all approaches to the Indian Ocean should be controlled by the Indian Navy. This includes the Malacca Straits and the Andaman Islands. The expansion of the Indian Navy, which includes 2 aircraft carriers, 5 Soviet Kashin class destroyers, and 21 frigates,<sup>45</sup> has increased other Southeast Asian nations' apprehension over India's intentions, particularly those bordering the Indian Ocean. In addition, India has developed an airlift capability which was demonstrated when two battalions were airlifted to the Maldives in response to the coup of November 1988. India has also tested an ICBM (2,400) called Agni in May 1989, as well as a surface-to-surface short-range missile called Prithvi in

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<sup>45</sup>. Buszynski, Leszek. "Declining Super Powers: The Impact on ASEAN", The Pacific Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1990.

February 1989. The Bangkok Post claimed that India had come of age as a military power and wanted 'international recognition as a world player.'<sup>46</sup> India's military build-up is a contradiction of its proposal for making the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, similar to the ZOPFAN concept of the ASEAN. The Indian Navy has extended its presence and influence over vast areas of the Indian Ocean beyond its exclusive economic zone. It has also thwarted a UN resolution making South Asia a nuclear-free zone by developing its nuclear capability, thereby encouraging Pakistan in nuclear arm race.<sup>47</sup>

During the Cold War, the superpowers seemed to accept the changing role of India as a powerful regional actor as a counterweight to China. From the Southeast Asian perspective, there is an Indian tendency to regard the region as a former colony of Indian civilization, a view based on a distorted understanding of the spread of Indian culture in that area in pre-modern times. In Indonesia, there is a view amongst a minority that India may become a more direct threat than China which at the present time lacks a naval air capability, of the

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<sup>46</sup>. "New Delhi Flexes Its Muscles", Editorial, Bangkok Post, 23 May 1989.

<sup>47</sup>. Bradock, Robert, W. India's Foreign Policy Since 1971, London Publisher, London, U.K. 1990, p. 90.

kind possessed by India, which would be necessary to enforce its claim within the region.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>. Kreisberd, P., Op. Cit. p. 16.

## **VI. THREATS TO THE ASEAN**

### **A. CAMBODIAN CONFLICT**

The Cambodian conflict is in many ways typical of the conflicts that characterize developing regions. At the beginning, the conflict was bilateral (Khmer-Vietnamese) and domestic (Intra-Khmer), but became internationalized by the dynamics of deep-seated Thai-Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese antagonism, as well as global Sino-Soviet and Soviet-American rivalries.

In ASEAN's view, Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia violated two of its cardinal security norms: non-interference and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of another country, and the non-use of force to resolve political disputes. The ASEAN has consistently and strongly deplored Hanoi's intervention and reaffirmed the right of the Cambodian people to self-determination. Thailand viewed the invasion and occupation by the Vietnamese of Cambodia as a threat to its national security.

The ASEAN as a regional organization could not have prevented the Vietnamese invasion even if it had anticipated Hanoi's action. It nevertheless played a major role in the conflict's containment and final termination. The ASEAN may not have had a collective self-defense arrangement capable of

meeting the advancing Vietnamese, but it used its collective coercive diplomacy to implement the terms of the declaration of a July 1981 ASEAN-initiated, U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK). That declaration called for a total withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia, emphasized the right of the Cambodian people to self-determination, and stressed the need for Cambodia to remain non-aligned in order to safeguard the legitimate security concerns of its neighboring states. The declaration was sought to deny the victory of Vietnam in Cambodia and to prevent the spread of the conflict to other ASEAN states, especially Thailand. The ASEAN sought to terminate the conflict through a combination of political-diplomatic, economical and military pressure that made the costs of dominance in Cambodia unbearably high for Hanoi.

It should be noted that the agreement signed in Paris in October 1991 is a settlement and not a resolution of the intra-Khmer and Vietnamese-Khmer dimension of the conflict. The deep distrust among the four Khmer factions, and the animosity between the Cambodians (especially the Khmer Rouge) and the Vietnamese remain unaltered. In other words, there has been no significant change in the goals, attitudes and perceptions of these parties. There is a possibility that the conflict could be reignited of some point in the future, if the U.N.-supervised elections fail to produce a stable

government. The intra-Khmer conflict might also resurface and intensify.

The aggressive diplomatic efforts of the ASEAN and the plan to include the other nations of Indochina within the ASEAN, albeit with only observer status until they demonstrate sufficient political maturity,<sup>49</sup> this will enable the ASEAN to be politically involved and to intervene in any conflict that may erupt.

#### **B. THE SPRATLY ISLANDS**

The Spratly group of islands is located in the southern part of the South China Sea, 300 nautical miles (nml) west of the Philippine island of Palawan, 300 nml east of Vietnam and 650 nml south of Hainan (China). They consist of over 230 islets, reefs, shoals and sand banks. The total land area is about 250,000 square kilometers. (Enclosure F) The disputes over these islands involve China, Taiwan, Vietnam and three ASEAN countries (the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei). The claims of the ASEAN members differ from the rest in a significant ways. First, the ASEAN parties in the disputes do not claim the entire Spratly chain, but only certain islands. The Philippines has the largest claim, totaling some 60 islets, which they collectively call the Kalayaan Islands.

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<sup>49</sup>. Wanandi, Jusuf, "Asia-Pacific Security Forum: Rationale and Options from the ASEAN Perspective", Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. 1993, pp. 8-10

Malaysia claims three islands and four groups of rocks, while Brunei only claims the Louisa Reef. Both the Philippines and Malaysia have established a military presence in their respective claimed islands. China, Vietnam, and Taiwan have also stationed sizeable military forces in the islands they claim.

Economically, the Spratlys are believed to be rich in oil and other minerals, such as manganese nodules, as well as fishing grounds. Strategically, the islands are located near major sea-lanes in eastern Asia which carry about 90% of Japan's oil. During World War II, the Spratlys were used by the Japanese Navy as a submarine base and staging area for its operations on Malaya and the archipelagic Southeast Asia: the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. Control of the island group could provide a country with a staging points for surveillance, sea-lane interdiction, and other naval operations that could disrupt traffic from Singapore to southern China and Taiwan.

Despite the strategic and probable economic importance of the islands and the military presence of the disputing parties, all have openly expressed their intentions to settling the dispute on the Spratly Islands through peaceful and diplomatic means. The ASEAN has proposed the creation of a "Spratly Authority" to handle issues that will arise on these contested islands.

### C. OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperation and harmony among the ASEAN nations has prospered since its formation in 1967. However, the absence of a real superpower to impose the Association's decisions has greatly affected the effectiveness of the ASEAN. This was demonstrated when the Association's efforts on the Cambodian issue was only realized after the great powers and the UN recognized and participated in the conflict resolution. The existence of a six-nation organization in a sub-portion of a vast area of the Asia-Pacific region may pose the danger of its being absorbed by a larger organization in the area.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was launched in 1984. It consists of powerful nations like the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and the three Chinese economies (PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong), which could easily overturn whatever decision the ASEAN states (also members of APEC) might want to impose. This was shown when Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahatir recommended an regional economic grouping in the area without the United States. This was immediately objected to by Japan.

Malaysia and Singapore, who are members of the of the Five-Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA), which includes the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, are supposed to consult with the other members before deciding on security and political issues. The ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference or ASEAN-PMC has expanded the ASEAN to include the United

States, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the European Community (EC). It can also alter whatever resolution the Association might decide.

In November of 1993, the United States hosted in Seattle, Washington, an unprecedented meeting of leaders from 15 Pacific Rim economies, including China, Taiwan, Japan and Australia to an "informal meeting" called the First Asia-Pacific summit. This informal summit was supposed to focus on economic issues and to further trade liberalization in the region. Like the APEC, this conference is expected to be held annually. The Asia-Pacific summit could also pose a threat to the effectiveness of the ASEAN. This forum will be looking at the interest of the whole Asia-Pacific Rim which could be contrary to the interests of the ASEAN.

#### **D. RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS, COMMUNIST INSURGENTS AND RACIAL PROBLEMS**

The role of religious extremism as a threat to regime and regional stability in ASEAN focuses on the political influence of Islam. The role of Islam, like that of ethnicity, varies widely within the region. This is partly due to the uneven distribution of the Muslim population which constitutes a majority in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, but only 5% of the population in Thailand, 7% in the Philippines and 17% in Singapore. But in the recent years, signs of an Islamic resurgence and the rise of extreme religious fundamentalism

have been evident not only in the Middle East but also in most of the ASEAN countries. Separatist movements in some ASEAN countries like the Philippines, and Thailand could be attributed to the Muslim extremists.

In the Philippines, the Muslim secessionist movement under the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has been active in recent years and has demanded greater autonomy in the island of Mindanao. There is a deadlock in the negotiations, because the demand for an autonomous Mindanao is opposed by the majority of the population of the island, who are predominantly Christians. The government cannot give in to some of the unreasonable demands of hard-line Muslim extremists.

In Thailand, however, separatists among the Muslim population of southern Thailand have been reduced significantly as a result of security cooperation between Thai and Malaysian forces. There has also been greater sensitivity on the part of the Thai government to Muslim demands for the preservation of their unique identity.

The most encouraging development in the ASEAN region is the decline of communism as a revolutionary political force. "With the exception of the Philippines, communist insurgents no longer pose a credible threat to regime survival in ASEAN states. The governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have prevailed over local communist parties which once enjoyed

a considerable following.<sup>50</sup> Though the communist struggle has always been "protracted" and the possibility of a communist revival still exists, because of the global collapse of communism chances are that the communist threat in the ASEAN will eventually diminish.

The threat of communism in the ASEAN was best described in the statement of Singapore former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew:

The future that China once envisaged of fraternal communist parties taking over control of ASEAN countries was, and is, too simplistic.... None of the ASEAN countries has any need for communism or communist parties to bring about a better society and a better economic life for its people.

There are also some racial problems in the region. Communalism tends to erode the multi-racial harmony because it is inclined to create segregation and discrimination in some ASEAN nations. Malaysia and Singapore with a delicate mix of Malay and Chinese in their population, have a tendency to erupt into racial clashes if their respective governments fail to handle it properly. This is what happened in the Malaysian and Singapore Chinese riots in 1959 and 1961.

#### **E. OTHER INTRA-REGIONAL CONFLICTS**

One measure of the success enjoyed by the ASEAN as a regional organization is the prevention of armed conflicts between neighboring members on border issues. The unclear borders created by the various colonial powers that once

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<sup>50</sup>. Acharya, A., Op. Cit. p. 17.

dominated the region have caused various internal problems among the ASEAN states. The detailed causes and resolutions of these border disputes is a study by itself and, therefore, this author will just mention some of the significant issues and briefly describe each conflict. It should be noted that in most border disputes, Malaysia being at the center of the region is always involved.

### **1. Malaysia and Singapore**

Malaysia and Singapore are engaged in a dispute over the rock called the Pedra Branca Island by Singapore, and Bato Putih White Rock by the Malaysians. This is an island off the coast of Johor. It is about 55 Kilometers northeast of Singapore and houses the British-built Horsburg lighthouse as well as a radar station. Singapore claims it on the basis of control exercised since the 1840s, while Malaysia claims that the island belongs to the state of Johor. Both countries have agreed in principle to settle the dispute through diplomatic channels and exchanges of documents but the negotiations have dragged over on the past ten years. This issue has allowed the Malaysian opposition party Parti Islam (PAS) to score points at the expense of the ruling party National Front Government.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>. Balakrishnan, N., "Tangled Ties", Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 July 1992, p. 21.

## **2. Malaysia and the Philippines**

The dispute over Sabah in North Borneo, was once regarded as the most dangerous bilateral dispute within ASEAN. The Philippines has shown documents that Sabah was leased to the Sultan of Sulo (a Sultanate in the Southern Philippines) by the British in the early 1900s. In fact, to the present, the Sultan of Sulo is still receiving compensation from the lease. Malaysia claimed that Sabah was bought from the Sultan by the British and not leased as claimed by the Philippines. The case was recommended by the Philippines for elevation to the World Court, but Malaysia refuses to permit the issue to be decided by the world body. Armed confrontations almost erupted between the two countries in 1966 had it not been for the decisive efforts of the ASEAN, particularly Thailand. The issue is now considerably muted since the Philippines dropped the claim at the 1977 ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur, but it has not been formally abandoned. However, the official visit of the Malaysian Prime Minister to the Philippines in February 1994, is a healthy sign that the issue is not of importance.

## VII. ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS

The ASEAN has three options or alternatives it may pursue in order to adapt the Association to the dynamics of the international world order in general and the region in particular. First is to strengthen the Association, expand the membership, and organize it into a collective self-defense organization with a standing military arm to enforce its decisions and insure security and stability within the region. Second, is to maintain the status quo. Let the Association keep its original objective of co-operation solely for economic, social and cultural purpose. The third option is for the organization to merge with larger organizations like the ASPAC, the First Asia-Pacific Summit or another association in the Asia-Pacific region which includes powerful and economically advanced nations.

The first option, to expand its membership and strengthening the ASEAN with a military arm, has shown its effectiveness when the Association as a singular force convinced the UN Security Council to resolve the Cambodian problem when there was a direct threat to the security of one of its members, Thailand. This forced Vietnam to withdraw its occupation of the country. The security and stability of the region depended on the developments in Cambodia. This was one

common interest and concern among the ASEAN states. The increasing refugee problem, the fear of the Cambodian conflict spilling over into Thailand, and apprehension over Vietnamese intentions in the region forced the ASEAN to act decisively and act as one to resolve these crises. The common threats and common interests existing among its members compelled the ASEAN to behave unilaterally. But without such commonality, can the ASEAN be expected to act in a similar fashion?

It should be noted that there is a gap in the pace of economic development within the ASEAN nations and a much wider disparity if the non-member countries of Indochina were included in the ASEAN. These economic differences causes the ASEAN nations to pursue various interests. The economies of the member nations of the ASEAN are one of the major factors that will determine the objectives of the organization.

Within the Southeast Asian region, which includes Indochina, there exists two completely different ideologies, communism and capitalism. This factor will affect the future of ASEAN membership. Of the five remaining communist countries in the world, two are in Southeast Asia (Vietnam and Laos). While North Korea and China are within East Asia and exert great influence on the path the nations of Southeast Asia may choose to pursue.

Among the ASEAN states, there are various differences in the priorities and the national interests of the different member nations. Singapore depends heavily one international

trade to maintain its economy and insists on the presence of the great powers in the region, like the United States, for the protection of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and maintenance of regional stability. Indonesia and Malaysia, on the other hand, believe that the region should be free from super powers influence in accordance to the ASEAN principle of ZOPFAN. Thailand has focused its attention on Indochina as a market for its products, with the ambition of making Bangkok the center of Indochina. The Philippines, the only nation of the ASEAN which has remained economically slow, is still concerned with its internal problems. While Brunei, like Singapore, has to depend on the outside powers for its external security.

With these diverse interests and preferences of the ASEAN member states, and the contrasting economic positions of the various countries in Southeast Asia, it is very unlikely that the Association will expand and form into a collective self-defense arrangement. Each country is concerned with the development of its economy. At present, no nation in the region has the resources nor the interest to organize a standing force.

Regarding the second option, for the ASEAN to maintain its status quo, the changes in the international order and the dynamics of regional conditions, have made it impossible for the organization to isolate itself from international political involvement. The involvement of the ASEAN in the

Cambodian conflict and its dependence on the Security Council and the superpowers for its resolution has shown that the ASEAN must involve the Association for crisis resolution purposes and that it must invite external actors to the region to assist in certain conflict settlements. The ASEAN, therefore, cannot remain passive and isolated from the realities of the politically complex international order. Economic and cultural collaboration is intertwined with political, and often military, participation.

The last option, which is for the ASEAN to disintegrate and merge its member nations, individually into larger organizations in the area, should be the last thing that the ASEAN might do. The ASEAN as an organization should join larger organizations as one and with a single unilateral voice. With a solid and a unified stand, the Association would be in a better position to be heard at the bargaining table and be recognized by the big powers and economically advanced nations.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

ASEAN had its beginning as a diplomatic mechanism for subregional reconciliation. Initially conceived for economic co-operation, it has gradually evolved into an organization of political and security co-operation going beyond the bounds of its member nations. Though the membership has expanded only gradually since its formation in 1967, from five to six members, its corporate identity has been recognized as an international actor.

However, as a regional organization has it been effective as it should be? Some consider the Association to be successful, since no armed conflict has erupted within the ASEAN since its creation. Others believe that it could do more. As one political analyst wrote, "Unless ASEAN and other interested parties move beyond the dialogue of a dining club and begin focusing on concrete action, the challenges to regional security will go unmet".<sup>52</sup> The optimism generated by the end of the Cold War for regional stability and the US-Sino and Sino-Soviet rivalries has substantially been eroded. While the possibility of a major armed international conflict in Southeast Asia may seem remote at the moment, strategic uncertainties and potential flashpoints abound. Certainly, no ASEAN leader is optimistic about the changing regional balance

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<sup>52</sup>. Acharya, A., Op. Cit., P. 74.

of power, even if none can point to any clear external threat to regional security.

The ASEAN may be described as one of the more successful regional organizations in the world, but it cannot isolate itself from the political realities of the changing times. The goals of the founding fathers of the Association to free the region from external powers and for the organization to remain as an economic block cannot be possible without security and defense agreements. As shown in the containment and termination of the Cambodian conflict, the ASEAN as a regional organization was a major actor in the final conflict resolution. The potential strength of the ASEAN can be used to balance any threat from any external superpower. Even with the ideological differences among the other Southeast Asian nations, like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma, the ASEAN leaders should find ways to harness these economically strapped nations which could be beneficial to the Association.

A defense community may not be possible at the moment or in the foreseeable future among the ASEAN members. Aside from the astronomical cost of a standing regional force, there is diversity in their interests, and in their cultural, historical, and ideological experiences. There is also uneven economic development and varying threat perceptions among its members. At present there is no nation among the ASEAN who would be willing to contribute men and material, even if they have these resources, in defense of another member state. With

their different priorities, their resources are much more needed in their economic development.

With the end of the Cold War, and the continued disappearance of the communist threat, a collective self-defense or a military alliance may not be necessary at the moment. On the other hand, strengthening the Association as a security community to include non-ASEAN nations will assure that no member will resort to the use of force in settling disputes. This will guarantee the much needed stability and security of the region. The ASEAN has shown its identity in the international scene. With a more cohesive Southeast Asian organization and stronger solidarity, the ASEAN will be in a better bargaining position vis-a-vis other external actors. It is in its diplomatic role that the ASEAN has assumed a corporate identity. Only with harmonious relationships with the rest of the Southeast Asia nations can the ASEAN succeed as a regional organization and attain an atmosphere of relative security and stability.

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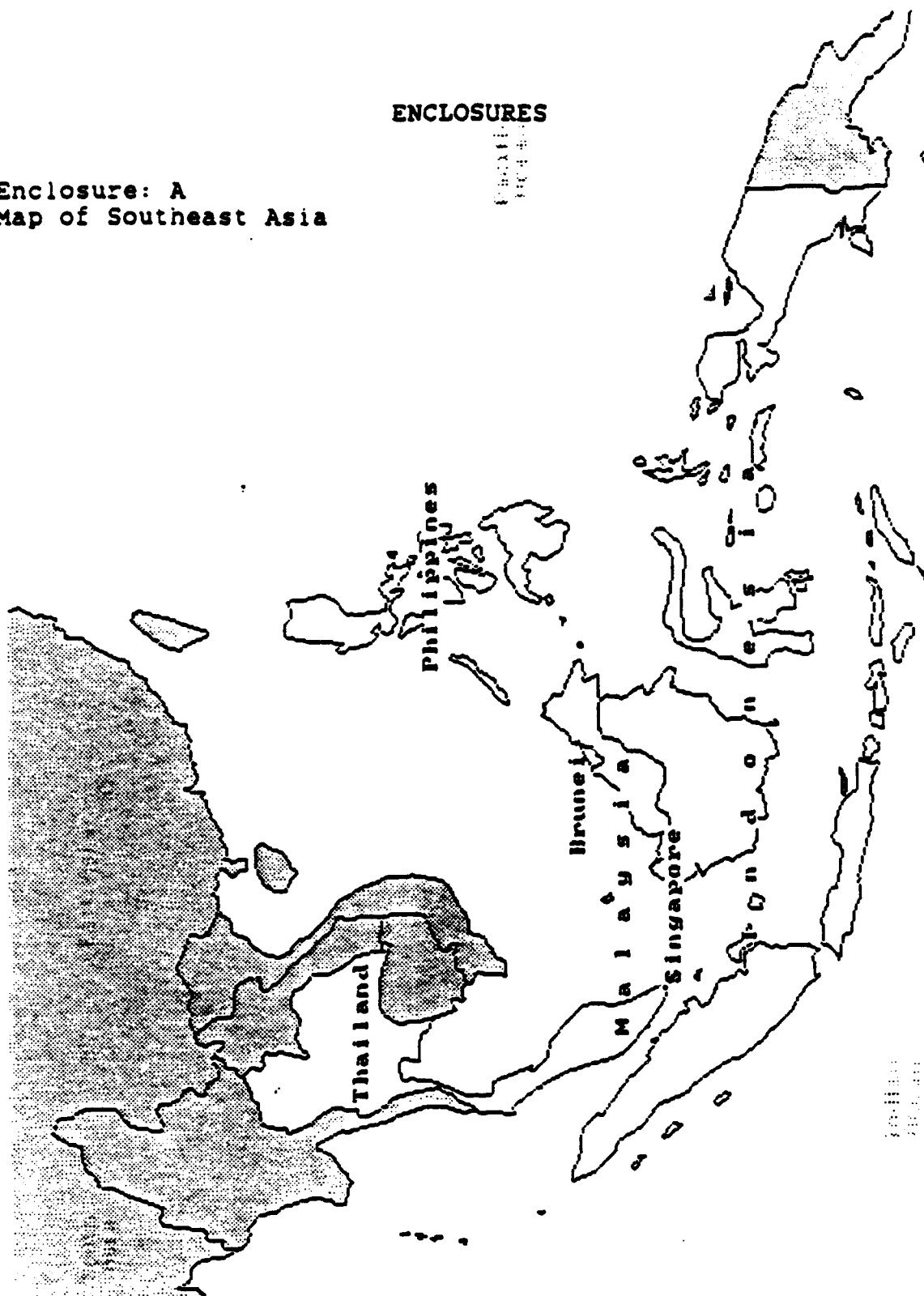
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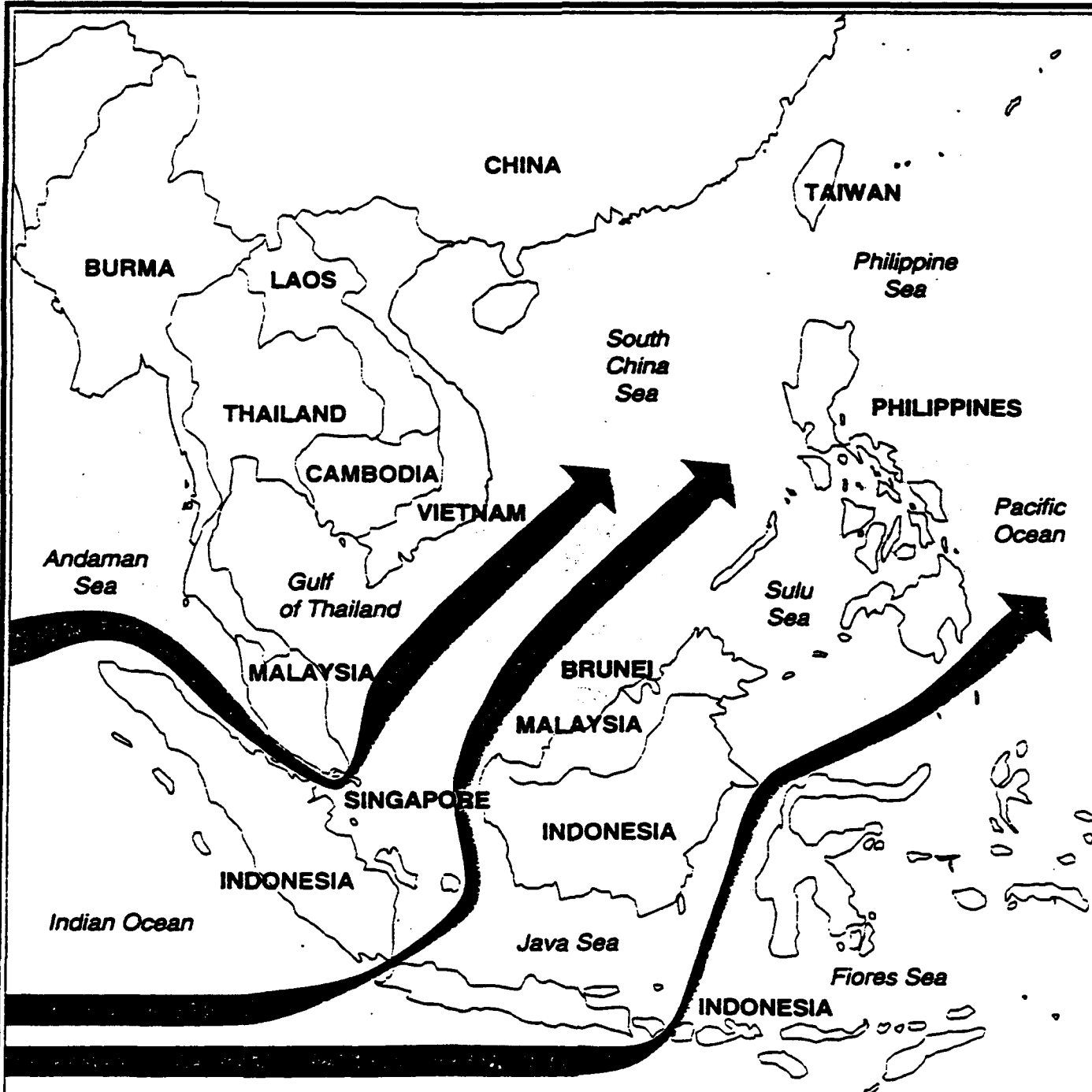
ENCLOSURES

Enclosure: A  
Map of Southeast Asia



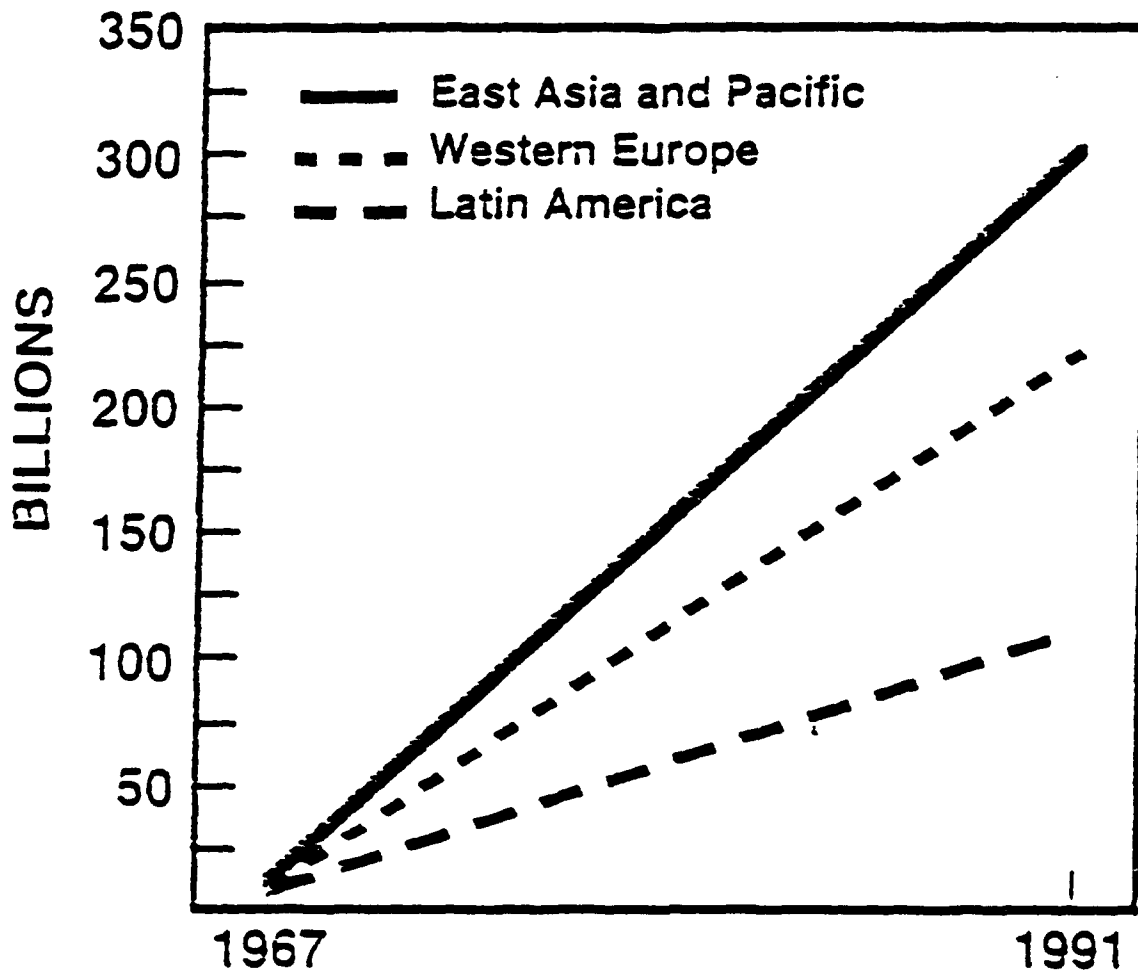
Enclosure: B  
Critical Sea Lines of Communication in Southeast Asia

**CRITICAL SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**



## U.S. TWO-WAY TRADE, 1967 AND 1991

Billions of U.S. Dollars



Sources: IMF, Direction of Trade Census,  
U.S. Department of Commerce

Enclosure: D  
Phased U. S. Troop Reductions

PHASED TROOP REDUCTIONS						
Country Service	1990 Starting Strength	Phase I Reductions 1990-1992	Philippines Withdrawal	1993 Strength	Phase II Reductions 1992-1995	1995 Strength (Approximate)
JAPAN	50,000	4,773		45,227	700	44,527
Army Personnel	2,000	22		1,978		1,978
Navy Shore-based	7,000	502		6,498		
Marines	25,000	3,489		21,511		21,511
Air Force	16,000	560		15,440	700	14,740
Joint billets		200				
KOREA	44,400	6,987		37,413	6500*	30,913*
Army Personnel	32,000	5,000		27,000		27,000
Navy Shore-based	400			400		400
Marines	500			500		500
Air Force	11,500	1,987		9,513		9,513
PHILIPPINES	14,800	3,490	11,310			
Army Personnel	200		200	relocated		
Navy Shore-based	5,000	672	4,328	elsewhere		
Marines	900		900	in region:		
Air Force	8,700	2,818	5,882			
				1,000		1,000**
TOTAL	109,200	15,250	11,310	83,640	7,200	76,440
	25,800			25,800		25,800
	135,000			109,440		102,240
NOTE:						
25,800 "afloat or otherwise forward deployed."						
*Korean troop reductions deferred in light of North Korean threat.						
**Estimated Relocations to Japan, Korea, and Singapore. Does NOT include Guam.						

Enclosure: E  
Japanese Costsharing

## JAPANESE COSTSHARING

YEAR	US	JAPAN	TOTAL	US%	JAPAN%	JAPAN% w/o U.S. salaries
1984	2,276	2,038	4,314	53 %	47 %	
1985	2,552	2,134	4,686	54 %	46 %	
1986	3,277	2,184	5,461	60 %	40 %	
1987	3,759	2,431	6,190	61 %	39 %	
1988	4,521	3,260	7,781	58 %	42 %	
1989	4,391	3,085	7,476	59 %	41 %	54.5 %
1990	3,500	2,900	6,400	55 %	45 %	63.0 %
1991	4,000	3,300	7,300	55 %	45 %	62.0 %
1992	3,800	3,500	7,300	52 %	48 %	65.0 %
1993	3,650	3,650	7,300	50 %	50 %	68.0 %
1994	3,500	3,800	7,300	48 %	52 %	71.0 %
1995	3,350	3,950	7,300	46 %	54 %	74.0 %

Unit=\$1 million

1991-1995 figures are estimates

### Notes:

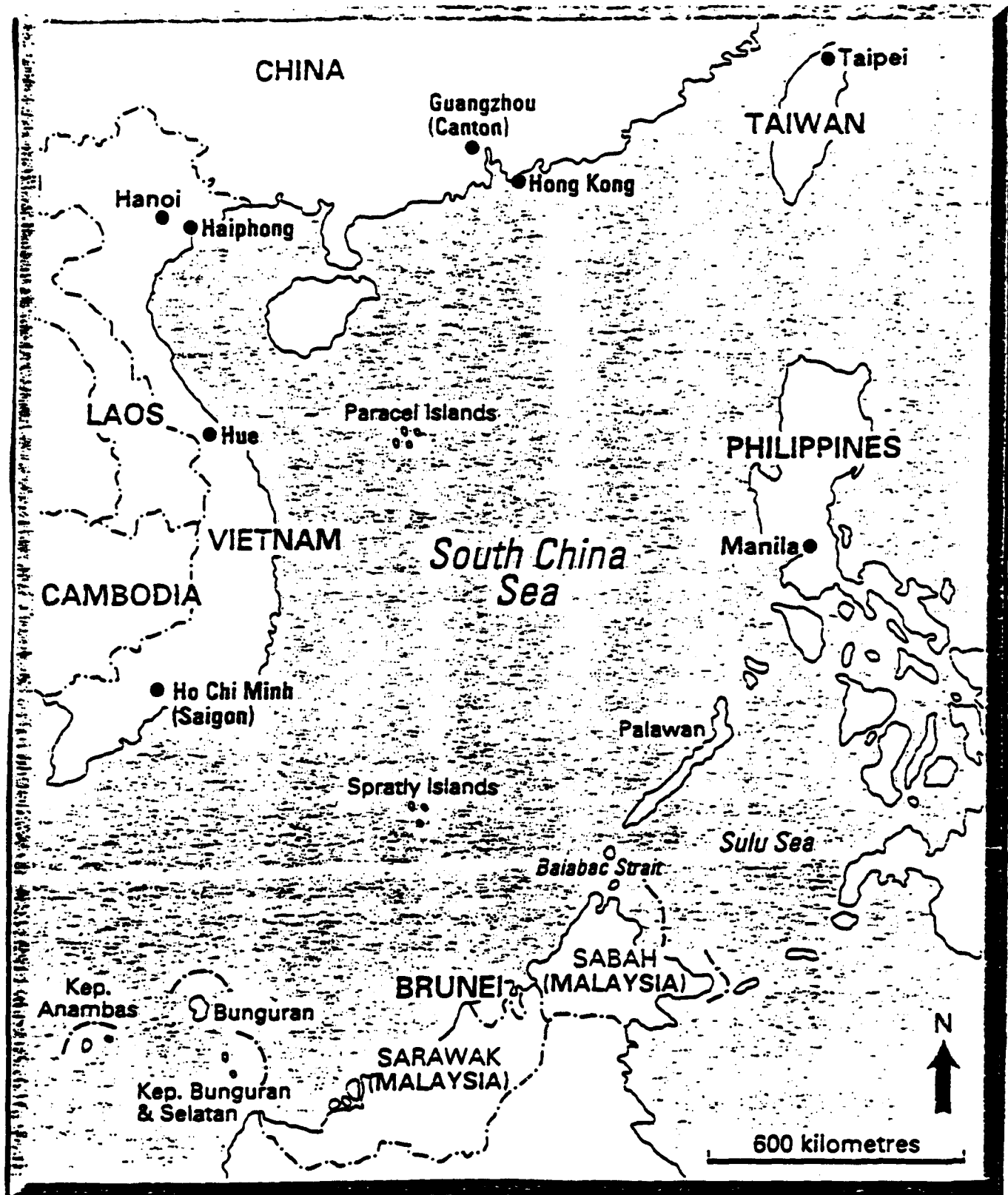
1992-1995 are estimates based on 1991 stationing cost data and a yen rate of ¥134/\$.

U.S. costs include non-appropriated fund labor costs and are based on US fiscal year.

GOJ host nation support includes non-budgeted categories and is based on JFY, which is six months later than US fiscal year.

1992-95 cost sharing estimates based on GOJ budget projection for labor and utilities contributions.

Enclosure: F  
Locations of the Spratly Islands



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